

CDPHE

Food Safety for Gardens



School Gardens

Gardens provide children an opportunity to take part in their own food production

Growing your own vegetables, fruits and herbs is economical

Gardens are allowed as long as the produce is grown safely



Food Safety

It is estimated that 48 million or 1 in 6 Americans get sick from food each year

Nearly half of all outbreaks are due to contaminated produce

While foodborne illness can happen to anyone it is more harmful to certain people, especially children



Garden Location

Gardens should be located away from:

Dumpsters

Animals

Water runoff

Utilities

Compost

Standing water

Provide barriers to keep animals, such as birds, deer, rodents and other wildlife away from the garden

Barriers may include fencing or cages over plants such as strawberries and leafy greens



Water

Only use drinking water for edible parts of plants and for washing your produce



Soil

Consider having your soil tested for levels of contaminants such as chemicals, pesticides, lead etc.

Consider purchasing soil that has been commercially packaged and labeled for growing food crops



Only use non-toxic, non-leaching materials for raised-beds, containers, stakes, or trellises

Do not use materials that contain contaminants such as pressure-treated wood, used tires, single-use plastics, old railroad ties etc.

Compost

Do not use raw manure or animal or human waste in your compost pile

Only add plant products such as fresh fruit and vegetable waste to your compost pile. Grass clippings, leaves, and twigs may also be added.

Do not add animal products as they need specific conditions to safely compost

Locate your compost pile in a secure location away from potential contamination, such as a dumpster, standing water or water runoff



Chemical Use

It is best to avoid using any pesticides or herbicides

Check with your county Cooperative Extension Office for the best non-chemical method of control for local pest problems



If chemicals are used children should never handle or use these products, they must be inaccessible to children, and used according to labeled instructions

Fertilizer Use

Fertilizers should only be used according the labeled instructions

They must be secured in a safe and locked location when not in use

Children should never handle fertilizers

Download current Material Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for fertilizers and pesticides for safe handling and storage instructions as well as what to do in the event of an incident or exposure



Harvesting

Harvest regularly to remove rotten, damaged, or contaminated produce

Wash hands prior to handling produce

Use clean, sanitized food grade containers to hold harvested produce

Use clean and sanitized harvesting tools such as scissors, knives, etc.



Handling Produce

Thoroughly wash produce with drinking water before consuming

Wash in a clean and sanitized sink designated for food preparation

Work with your local health department to assure the sink you are using is approved



Handling Produce

Surfaces used to prepare produce should always be cleaned and sanitized

You can use the same approved food contact surface sanitizer you already use or prepare a bleach solution of 1 tsp per bleach per 1 gallon of water. Always test to assure the solution is 50-200 ppm chlorine.

Don't forget to keep your garden harvest tools, including gloves and containers cleaned and sanitized



Handling Produce

After washing the produce wear gloves for further preparation

Surfaces used to prepare produce should always be cleaned and sanitized



Additional Foodborne Illness Prevention

Keep produce that will be eaten raw away from raw or undercooked animal-derived foods

Refrigerate cut produce and discard after 7 days

Never handle food if you are sick

Proper handwashing and good hygienic practices are critical in preventing foodborne illness



Thank you!

